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The Ohio Presidents

AN ADDRESS

Delivered at the Ohio Centennial Celebration,
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By THOMAS EWING, J.R.

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THE OHIO PRESIDENTS.

THOMAS EWING, JR.

Five Presidents of the United States out of the twenty-five were born in Ohio. If President Garfield and President McKinley had been permitted to live out the terms for which they were elected, we should have had a period beginning with 1869, and embracing thirty-six years, within which but one man not an Ohioan by birth occupied the White House.



THOMAS EWING, JR.

by birth gives Virginia the advantage by two; but, one of the Virginians, John Tyler, elected as Vice President, may fairly be excluded; and President William Henry Harrison, who was born in Virginia and was a citizen of Ohio by adoption, is claimed by both states.

Moreover, another splendid Ohioan, William Tecumseh Sherman, would have received the Republican nomination in 1884 and all but certainly have been elected, had he not announced that he would not permit his name to be brought before the convention, would not accept the nomination if tendered to him, and would not serve as President if elected. There have been notable instances of men who have felt constrained by considera-

tions of honor to decline a nomination. Major McKinley twice furnished such an example; Samuel L. Southard is said to have declined the vice-presidential nomination in 1840 (which, as the event proved, carried with it the presidency), because his failure to secure a solid delegation from New Jersey for Mr. Clay had been criticised. But General Sherman is the only man in our history to refuse what he believed to be an offer of the presidency, when free to accept.

There is an incident now quite forgotten, except as a family tradition, which I trust that I may be pardoned for mentioning. In the Whig Convention of 1848, after General Taylor had been nominated to the presidency, a member from Pennsylvania, seconded by a member from Tennessee, put in nomination to the vice-presidency Thomas Ewing, of Ohio. The nomination would have passed almost without opposition, had not an Ohio delegate, in the name of the Ohio delegation, withdrawn it, professing falsely that he did so with authorization from Mr. Ewing himself. But for this bit of trickery, Millard Fillmore's place as thirteenth President would have been taken by an Ohio man.

The explanation of the supremacy of this State has been found in the fact that through it passed by far the larger part of that migration from the East which has shifted the center of population and the weight of political influence into the Ohio basin. It was not a mad rush like that of the argonauts across the plains in 1849. It was like the spreading of a forest, which takes root as it advances; it was like the maneuver of the Roman legion, when the younger and more lightly armed troopers passed through the line of veterans to engage in the battle.

In a speech delivered before the Ohio Society of New York (May, 1886), Benjamin Harrison said:

“After the feeble thirteen Colonies had struggled through years of bitter war, and had overcome the greatest empire in the world, that grand band of patriots who had made known in bleeding marks of footprints on the snow at Valley Forge their devotion to liberty and constitutional government — these men — poor in everything save honor, turned out of their old-time place by the vicissitudes of the long and wearying war — these men looked to some new field where they could repair the fortunes they had lost. And that high tide of intelligence and patriotism

was lifted above the crest of the Alleghenies and it poured into the valley of the Ohio. It was the first basin to receive the fresh crystal waters of the spring in their pristine purity, when they broke forth from the mountain-side where devotion, patriotism and courage had seen them born. Ohio stood at the gateway of the West, through which passed the tide that was to people and develop the mighty Northwest."

In 1796 there were 15,000 whites in the Northwest Territory. When General Harrison welcomed LaFayette to Cincinnati in 1825, the population of Ohio alone was seven hundred thousand; by 1840, with a million and a half, she had become the third state in the Union. This place she held until passed by Illinois in the decade ending with the year 1890.

Kentucky and Tennessee had been settled largely by Virginia and North Carolina, which had owned their territory; but the population of Ohio was formed by the mingling of the blood of all of the Colonial states. Immigrants came from the entire region which includes Maine on the north and the Carolinas on the south. Virginia had her military bounty lands; Connecticut her western reserve; New Jersey and Pennsylvania founded Cincinnati; New England, Marietta. Ohio was thus the first-born child, when the young republic grappled with the great problem of continental dominion. Her settlers, as their descendants, were native-born Americans, living under free and equal laws, owning their own homes, knowing neither wealth nor poverty, and inheriting in purest form the great ideals and traditions of the Revolution. Such a people sprang to the front instantly and inevitably when our national existence was in jeopardy; and after the terrible and tragic struggle of the Civil War was over, Ohio's sons, by natural selection, became party-leaders and heads of the nation.

My subject calls for a discussion of all six of our Presidents. It is manifestly impossible within the limits set to make more than a passing reference to so many and such great men. But I must, at least, call the honored roll.

Of William McKinley, whose splendid service and lovable character are known intimately to all, it is too soon to speak fully. His administration was generally so successful that it is

difficult to choose where to bestow special praise. If I may be permitted to hazard an opinion, the Chinese incident called out the finest exhibition of his statesmanship and diplomacy. But of one thing we may be sure: that he will be remembered as the President to whom, above all of the others, fell the great privilege, nobly exercised, of drawing together the sympathies and aspirations of north and south for effecting the policies of our re-united country. Deep down under the passions and bitterness which slavery and the Civil War aroused was a noble feeling of brotherhood, cherished most strongly by those who were actually engaged in the conflict. It found expression in General Grant's historic saying, "Let us have peace." It was dear to General Hayes and General Garfield. It was evidenced by the great number of northern soldiers who, from sympathy for the south, after the warfare was over changed their party affiliation. It found perhaps most lasting expression in the policy of reconciliation which was so notable a feature of Major McKinley's administration.

Benjamin Harrison, though a native of Ohio and a graduate of our Miami University, politically was a son of Indiana. Partisan ridicule represented him as hidden beneath his grandfather's hat. He far exceeded his grandfather in intellect and training; and in the years (all too few) to which his life was extended after his term as President, his splendid abilities and great labors in his profession won for him a career which has been equalled by no ex-Presidents of the United States other than Thomas Jefferson and John Quincy Adams.

James Abram Garfield, intellectually supreme perhaps among them all, appealed with unrivalled force to the young men of the country. While a member of the House, where, had he remained, he would have been chosen Speaker, he was elected to the Senate and to the Presidency. His service as a Representative has seldom been exceeded in length, and never in distinction. But he lived for so short a time after induction into the office of President, that, as Mr. Blaine in his eulogy said, "His reputation in history will rest largely upon his service in the House of Representatives."

Rutherford B. Hayes, simple christian gentleman and patriot that he was, suffered from the fiercest political antagonism since the impeachment-trial of Andrew Johnson. For this, however, he was not responsible. The democratic party controlled the House of Representatives, which joined in the agreement to submit the count to the Electoral Commission. President Hayes' administration was distinguished by its purity, and by the achievement of the resumption of specie payments which has become a part of the settled financial policy of the government. And, however we may differ as to the wisdom of this and other matters of policy, he will always be held by the entire country in grateful remembrance as the President under whom local self-government was restored in the southern states.

Back of these comes Ulysses S. Grant. He stands first among them all by reason of his transcendent military services. Great as a soldier and patriot, rather than as a statesman, his career, in its truly significant aspects, belongs to the history of Ohio's sons in the Civil War.

It is the first of the Ohio Presidents, General William Henry Harrison, "Old Tip," as his followers lovingly called him, to whose election and administration I chiefly invite your attention. My father's father was his Secretary of the Treasury. My mother's grandfather, General Reasin Beall, of Wooster, Ohio, was one of his companions-in-arms in an early campaign; he was also an elector-at-large, called a senatorial elector, in 1840, and was offered, but declined, the secretaryship of war. Harrison's character and career have, therefore, strongly appealed to me. But aside from personal interest, it has seemed to me that at this centennial celebration we should recall the things that have passed from popular memory, rather than discuss and enlarge upon what is known of all men.

William Henry Harrison was born in Virginia in the year 1774, a son of one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

Receiving a military commission from President Washington in 1791, Harrison served under General Wayne in the campaign and battle of Miami Rapids, and attained the rank of captain.

In 1797 he was appointed secretary of the Northwest Territory, which embraced Ohio. In 1799 and 1800 he was a delegate to Congress. Here he procured the passage of an act requiring that the public lands be surveyed and sold in small tracts. Thereunto, no lands were sold in sections of less than three or four thousand acres, and it was impossible for the emigrants generally to acquire their own farms. When, years afterward, he was nominated for President, one of the reasons most strongly urged for his election was:

"He is the father of the present admirable system of disposing of the public lands, which has been so perfected that a poor man who can make up \$100 may become an independent freeholder."*

A note by Judge Burnet to the fifth of his famous letters contains a reference to General Harrison's political views at this time. It is interesting, also, for its reference to Mr. Jefferson, and I quote it in full, as follows:

"I can now recollect only four individuals in this place and neighborhood [Cincinnati] who then [1800] advocated the election of Mr. Jefferson against Mr. Adams. These were Major Zeigler, General Harrison, William McMillan and John Smith. There might have been one or two others not remembered. . . . [One man said.] 'When I am convinced that skill in describing the qualities and beauties of a flower or in discussing the wing of a butterfly qualifies a man for the duties of the presidential chair, I will vote for Mr. Jefferson.'"

Evidently, knowledge beyond the common in any but one's recognized field of activity was dangerous then, as it is to-day.

After his brief services in Congress, General Harrison was appointed Governor of Indiana and superintendent of Indian affairs. He negotiated thirteen treaties with the Indians, one of which added to the public domain a territory twice as large as the state of Ohio. In an interview at North Bend with a correspondent of Horace Greeley's paper, "The Log Cabin," General Harrison spoke of his office as Governor and his services as follows:

* From the *Harrisonian*, Zanesville, January 22, 1840.

"Mr. Jefferson, by his commission as Governor of Indiana and Upper Louisiana invested me with an authority greater than a Roman pro-consul. . . .

"I think I have personally obtained for the country from the Indians more millions of acres of land than the sword of a conqueror ever permanently won, and I trust, never dishonestly."

Besides his great services as Governor and negotiator with the Indians, he made an heroic defense of Fort Meigs (May, 1813), and fought two important battles, one upon a little stream called Tippecanoe (November 7, 1811), where he broke the charms and the influence of Tecumseh's great brother, the Prophet; the other on the river Thames (October 5, 1813), where Tecumseh was killed. In the latter campaign he had at one time as many as 10,000 volunteer militia in his command. The victory on the Thames and Commodore Oliver H. Perry's victory at Put-in-Bay together saved to this country the State of Michigan.

The difficulties of campaigning in the wilderness may be judged by the fact that every barrel of flour, by the time it reached the army, had cost one hundred dollars. Judge Burnet, in his speech in the Whig National Convention of 1839, said:

"A person who has not an accurate knowledge of the condition of the northwestern portion of Ohio at the time of the late war, when it was an unbroken wilderness, without inhabitants other than aborigines, without roads, bridges, ferries or improvements of any kind, cannot form any idea of the difficulties General Harrison encountered in feeding, sustaining and keeping together his army. The difficulties and perplexities which beset him during his campaigns are known to but few, and cannot be justly appreciated by any; yet by unceasing activity and by the efforts of his powerful mind, he overcame them all. . . . It is not generally known that the fleet built at Erie by which the command of the lakes was obtained was a project recommended by General Harrison, and that it was adopted by Mr. Madison in consequence of his unbounded confidence in the prudence and sound judgment of him who proposed it."

Subsequently to these military services, General Harrison was a Representative in Congress from Ohio; served in the Senate of the United States from 1825 to 1828; was sent as minister to the Republic of Columbia; and, in the campaign of 1836, was the most prominent candidate of the Whigs for the presidency, but was defeated by VanBuren whom he in turn defeated in 1840.

During the later years of his life, the General was living in his famous old residence on the banks of the Ohio at North Bend, where he enjoyed the life and reputation incident to his true position, that of one of the great first-settlers in the Northwest Territory. In person he was lithe and wiry but not tall, simple in manner, plain of dress, with the keen eye and weather-beaten face of the woodsman, and the sturdy, kindly, comfortable countenance of the Virginia bottom-lands farmer.

He had received more than the usual education of his associates. Above all, he was a student of nature and of Indian life. In an interesting discourse on the Aborigines in the Valley of the Ohio, delivered before the Ohio Historical Society at Columbus in the year 1837, he displays an intimate knowledge of the Indians, of the great forests, and of the remains of ancient peoples found along the Ohio River. Arguing for the antiquity of these remains and basing his arguments upon the character of the forests overgrowing them, he has one passage which is notable for first-hand observation of nature and for genuine eloquence. It is as follows:

"The process by which nature restores the forest to its original state, after being once cleared, is extremely slow. In our rich lands, it is, indeed, soon covered again with timber, but the character of the growth is entirely different, and continues so, through many generations of men. In several places on the Ohio, particularly upon the farm which I occupy, clearings were made in the first settlement, abandoned, and suffered to grow up. Some of them, now to be seen, of nearly fifty years' growth, have made so little progress toward attaining the appearance of the immediately contiguous forest, as to induce any man of reflection to determine that at least ten times fifty years would be necessary before its complete assimilation could be effected. The sites of the ancient works on the Ohio present precisely the same appearance as the circumjacent forest. You find on them all that beautiful variety of trees which gives such unrivaled richness to our forests. This is particularly the case on the fifteen acres included within the walls of the work, at the mouth of the Great Miami, and the relative proportions of the different kinds of timber are about the same. The first growth on the same kind of land, once cleared, and then abandoned to nature, on the contrary, is more homogeneous—often stunted to one, or two, or at most three kinds of timber. If the ground had been cultivated, yellow locust, in many places, will spring up as thick as garden peas. If it has not been cultivated, the black and white walnut will be the prevailing growth. The rapidity with which these trees grow for a time, smothers the attempt of other kinds

to vegetate and grow in their shade. The more thrifty individuals soon overtop the weaker of their own kind, which sicken and die. In this way, there is soon only as many left as the earth will well support to maturity. All this time the squirrels may plant the seed of those trees which serve them for food, and by neglect suffer them to remain,—it will be in vain; the birds may drop the kernels, the external pulp of which have contributed to their nourishment, and divested of which they are in the best state for germinating, still it will be of no avail; the winds of heaven may waft the winged seeds of the sycamore, cottonwood and maple, and a friendly shower may bury them to the necessary depth in the loose and fertile soil—but still without success. The roots below rob them of moisture, and the canopy of limbs and leaves above intercept the rays of the sun, and the dews of heaven; the young giants in possession, like another kind of aristocracy, absorb the whole means of subsistence, and leave the mass to perish at their feet. This state of things will not, however, always continue. If the process of nature is slow and circuitous, in putting down usurpation and establishing the equality which she loves, and which is the great characteristic of her principles, it is sure and effectual. The preference of the soil for the first growth ceases with its maturity. It admits of no succession, upon the principles of legitimacy. The long undisputed masters of the forest may be thinned by the lightning, the tempest, or by diseases peculiar to themselves; and whenever this is the case, one of the oft-rejected of another family will find between its decaying roots, shelter and appropriate food; and springing into vigorous growth, will soon push its green foliage to the skies, through the decayed and withering limbs of its blasted and dying adversary—the soil itself yielding it a more liberal support than to any scion from the former occupant. It will easily be conceived what a length of time it will require for a denuded tract of land, by a process so slow, again to clothe itself with the amazing variety of foliage which is the characteristic of the forests of this region. Of what immense age, then, must be those works, so often referred to, covered, as has been supposed by those who have the best opportunity of examining them, with the second growth *after the ancient forest state had been regained?"*

There can be no doubt that there existed a real and widespread enthusiasm for the hero of Tippecanoe. His nomination, like his election, was due to a tremendous popular upheaval. As William Creighton, Jr., of Chillicothe, wrote (Sept. 3, 1835):

“Old Ross will move this fall in all her strength. . . . We intend to call a great meeting for the last Saturday in this month to nominate Harrison for the Presidency. We cannot get along without heroism. We shall present in strong terms the hero of *three* wars, and will sweep the country. Our opponents will not see for the dust we raise.”

An old newspaper says :

"A gentleman passing through the State of Indiana recently, says he stopped at a tavern in one of the principal towns, where a register of the names of travelers was kept, and each individual was desired to write opposite his name the name of the person he would prefer for President, and that nine out of ten were for Harrison, but few for Clay, and only one for Van Buren out of a list of several hundred."

The Ohio Convention, held at Columbus, February 22, 1836, where General Harrison was first put in nomination for President, is described in a letter from John M. Creed, of Lancaster (Feb. 23, 1836), as "the largest ever held in the western country, and perhaps in the Union." Everybody was for Harrison. In the resolutions Clay and Webster were lauded to the skies. They were eulogized as "god-like men;" but when it came to nominating a candidate Harrison got all of the votes.

In the great national Whig Convention which met at Harrisburg in December, 1839, to place their candidate for President in nomination, General Harrison was overwhelmingly the choice.

The campaign which followed will always be memorable. A few of the war-cries of the Whigs are well-known :

"Van, Van is a used-up man";
"She's went,
"Hell-bent,
"For Governor Kent";
"The Whigs, the Whigs, they come, they come";

and the like.

Van Buren was the "fox holed at Kinderhook;" or after the analogy of "Old Hickory" was dubbed "Slippery Elm."

The Loco-focos lacked the war cries, but were ready with attacks on General Harrison. These are fairly summarized by the Harrison Eagle (May 16, 1840) as follows :

"Among the serious, fatal and unanswerable objections which the Locos bring against General Harrison, we find the following, namely: He is poor, ignorant and a coward — drinks hard cider, eats crackers, and treats his company with the same, instead of champagne — is an old granny — the petticoat candidate — the imbecile — the Log-cabin and hard-

cider farmer—who works with his own hands—is under the supervision of a committee who receive and answer letters, questions, etc.,—is entitled to no credit for any services, or bravery, during the last war, all his victories having been achieved by those under him."

In point of fact, Gen. Harrison was proud and tenacious of his opinions and quite ready to express them freely. The Committee of Correspondence was established largely to save him labor and postage. In a letter quoted in the Boone's Lick (Mo.) Times, he says: "I have actually from necessity been obliged to give up the correspondence of many of my best friends."

It was unwise to call attention to his poverty. Millions of the public money had passed through his hands, and they were empty and clean; and on his farm at North Bend were the families, not small, of three deceased sons, and an adopted child the orphan daughter of one of his military aides, all entirely dependent upon him. The Loco-foco sneers only gave zest to counter-cries such as the cry of "Gold-spoons," raised by the Whigs because President Van Buren had had gilded some of the spoons of the White-House furnishings.

As to his personal courage, it was vouched for, with one voice, by all of his old soldiers, including the Loco-foco Vice-President Richard M. Johnson, who "slew the great Tecumseh." Some of the stay-at-homes of 1812 tried to question it, but to no avail. The Loco-foco Governor of New Hampshire, who called Harrison a coward in 1840, had named a son for him during the war of 1812.

But the Locos committed their fatal blunder in ridiculing the General's log-cabin and his hard-cider hospitality. Thereby they gave the Whigs something popular to shout about, and a fine drink to wet their whistles with. For it was a time when in many sections of the country log-cabins were still the only dwellings known. There was not a section in which they were not numerous, and the "raisin" was an event for neighborly service and merry-making. Mr. Webster, at Saratoga (Aug. 19, 1840) said:

"It did not happen to me to be born in a log-cabin, but my elder brothers and sisters were born in a log-cabin, raised amid the snow-drifts of New Hampshire, at a period so early as that when the smoke first rose from its crude chimney and curled over the frozen hills, there

was no similar evidence of a white man's habitation between it and the settlements on the rivers of Canada. Its remains still exist. I make to it an annual visit. I carry my children to it to teach them the hardships endured by the generations which have gone before them. I love to dwell on the tender recollections, the kindred ties, the early affections, and the touching narratives and incidents which mingle with all I know of this primitive family abode."

So it very naturally came about that log-cabins were raised in every hamlet, and the large cities like New York were dotted with them. Smaller cabins were mounted on wagons. A friend, born in 1840, told me recently that she remembers as a child having for a play-house one of these cabins, large enough for a number of children to play in, which had been hauled about over the whole of the northern part of the State of New York, and which her father bought at the close of the campaign.

Mr. Carl Schurz, in his admirable life of Clay, has described the campaign briefly and vividly as follows:

"There has probably never been a presidential campaign with more enthusiasm and less thought than the Whig campaign of 1840. As soon as it was fairly started, it resolved itself into a popular frolic. There was no end of monster mass meetings, with log-cabins, raccoons and hard cider. One-half of the American people seemed to have stopped work to march in processions behind brass bands or drum and fife, to attend large picnics, and to sing campaign doggerel about "Tippecanoe and Tyler too." The array of speakers on the Whig side was most imposing: Clay, Webster, Corwin, Ewing, Clayton, Preston, Choate, Wise, Reverdy Johnson, Everett, Prentiss, Thompson of Indiana, and a host of lesser lights. But the immense multitudes gathered at the meetings came to be amused, not to be instructed. They met, not to think and deliberate, but to laugh and shout and sing."

But the songs were not all doggerel. It is true that we cannot defend more than a few lines of "Tippecanoe and Tyler too," nor that song, a mere snatch of which has come down to me by tradition, about the Whig party, running:

"they cannot spile her,
While we have Tom the wagon-boy
And Tom the old salt-biler."

"Biler" was an important word in the Whig rhyming dictionary.

"Go it, Harrison,
Come it, Tyler,
And we'll bust
Van Buren's biler."

There were, however, some stirring songs. All the familiar airs — "Hail, Columbia," "The Old Oaken Bucket," "Auld Lang Syne," "Hail to the Chief," "Bonnets of Blue," "Little Pig's Tail," "There's no Luck in the House," "Old Rosin the Beau," — were brought into requisition, to carry to the hearts of the people verses telling of "the battles, sieges, fortunes," which their old hero had passed, and of the good times he would bring in again. Take this song for the Tippecanoe battleground gathering as a sample:

"Come from the cabins, come!
Sons of the brave and free,
As your fathers came when the stirring drum
Beat loud for Liberty!
'Tis Freedom calls, as then
She called upon your sires.
Go forth like men, to the field again
Where burned their battle fires."

As Mr. Schurz says, the meetings were immense. I cite a few instances: Twelve thousand are reported at Springfield, Illinois; fifteen thousand at Greenville, Ohio; at Ft. Meigs, thirty thousand; and on the Tippecanoe battlefield forty thousand gathered; the meeting lasted for three days, and three thousand two hundred wagons were actually counted upon the grounds. At Hagerstown, Maryland, one of the speakers said he did not number the crowd "by hundreds or by thousands, but by acres." At Syracuse, New York, in September, it is said that fifty thousand people were present. A newspaper of the day reports of the meeting as follows: .

"A whole fleet of boats from the West came up the enlarged portion of the canal, three abreast, in a long line of procession. Every boat had its banners and decorations and the fine looking and well clad free-men that thronged them made the welkin ring with their music, joyous melodies and enthusiastic hurrahs."

At Lancaster, Pennsylvania, a procession was formed upwards of three miles in length, eight abreast, the crowd in the procession and in the town being estimated at seventy-five thousand.

At Chillicothe, where the idea of log-cabin raising originated, the procession at the first meeting, May 16, 1840, included a wagon carrying a Buckeye-cabin drawn by six horses, with a barrel of hard-cider outside the cabin, raccoon skins nailed to the logs, and a live raccoon climbing about the roof. The Kingston boys brought a canoe thirty feet long. The cabin raised was forty feet by seventy-five feet, and could seat a thousand people. On the occasion of General Harrison's visit to Chillicothe in September of that year, the double column of carriages and the procession of horsemen eight deep which went out to meet him extended over two miles. The General came down the road into the town in a barouche drawn by four horses and followed by an escort of horsemen and carriages a mile in length. A single citizen of the town, Henry Brush, is said to have entertained at table twenty-five hundred guests.

The procession at the log-cabin raising at St. Louis, the home of "the Hon. Gold Humbug Benton," is described at length in the Harrison Eagle of May 30, 1840, and more briefly as follows: First, the Tippecanoe Club with a banner showing an eagle strangling a green and yellow serpent whose tortuous folds were terminated with a fox's head; citizens with banners; ladies in carriages; the boys of the various schools; uniformed companies with coon-skins dangling from their heads to their waists; horsemen; procession of laborer's carts; laborers on foot with shovels, pick-axes, etc.; printers with a press mounted on a car, printing Tippecanoe songs which were distributed among the crowd; drays loaded with barrels of hard cider; a log-cabin drawn by six horses with the inscription "The string of the latch never pulled in"; blacksmiths with a forge and the motto "Strike for our country's good"; joiners and cabinet-makers with a miniature shop and men at work; a "tippe-canoe" drawn by six horses and filled with men; two smaller canoes filled with men throwing the lead and singing out the soundings; Fort Meigs, filled with soldiers, drawn by twelve yoke of oxen; in the Fort was a band of

drums and fifes, also cannons; the brick-layers; a log-cabin with an Indian canoe behind drawn by four horses; a regiment of Suckers; and finally, a body of men on foot with inscriptions: "Rhode Island victory," "Connecticut election 4,600 majority," and a comical looking wag with his thumb on his nose and twirling his fingers in Sam Weller style and the legend "You can't come it, Matty."

But the grand monster meeting, called, according to the language of the campaign, a "convention," was held at Dayton, then a town of five or six thousand inhabitants. Here, on September 10th, was gathered a crowd which, by actual survey of the space covered with people around the speakers' stand, and an allowance of four persons to the square yard, was estimated to number more than seventy-five thousand, while fully twenty thousand were scattered about the town and its vicinity. The meeting became famous as the convention of one hundred thousand!

This gathering is described in the Cincinnati Gazette of the time as follows:

"Delegates with their appropriate banners were there from Louisiana, Kentucky and Indiana. Old Kentuck told us she had finished her work and bade us go and do likewise. Louisiana pledged a majority of 4,200 for 'Old Tip' in November, and Indiana related a comical story of the way in which one Matty Van scampers down hill yelling 'Stop that cider barrel!' whenever he hears a report from one of the states as they successively cast their votes against the usurpers and spoils-men.

"There is living in and animating our breasts at this time the one general impression of an immense congregation of the people, above whose countless heads rise banners without number, and among whom move hither and yon log-cabins, mechanics' shops, a fleet of ships, canoes, cars, filled with young misses singing patriotic songs, bands of musicians playing national airs, emblems of freedom, denunciations of tyranny and *badges of Union* which proclaim that one purpose gathered all this together, by one spirit is it pervaded, and to *one result* does it tend."

At this time there were not more than fifty miles of steam-railway in the Northwest Territory. The only other means of conveyance were by the rivers, canals, and wagon-road. Sixteen canal boats laden with people, on February 21st, made the trip from Chillicothe to Columbus, in a pouring rain. It took twenty hours to cover the fifty miles. As for travel by road, an old

story tells of a traveler who saw a hat in the road and picked it up; under the hat was a man and under the man was a horse, sunk down in the mud.

Of course the crowds had their fun. They were American people, men, women and children, full of humor, *good humor*. Of course, large quantities of hard-cider were consumed. It was a campaign when staid old church-going farmers went about with canteens of hard-cider hung from their necks; and we, perhaps, must not discredit the statement of the *Toronto Patriot* that "the folks who now so loudly cry out for hard-cider at the same time prudently drink rum." A raising had always been a time for jollification. Thomas Corwin, the Whig candidate for Governor of Ohio, was, with the possible exception of Harrison, the greatest drawing card. He complained bitterly in later years that he would go down in history as a buffoon. He was, in fact, a man of lofty ideals and fine sense; but as a humorous stump-speaker, we probably never have had his equal in this country. One of his speeches during the campaign of 1840, delivered in the House of Representatives, will always be remembered. Isaac E. Crary, a young member from Michigan, attacked General Harrison's military career and reputation; and in the course of his speech, modestly let it be known that he himself was a brigadier-general of militia in Michigan on the peace establishment. Corwin, in his memorable reply, suggests that Alexander the Great might have made a man of himself in the art of war, had he been a member of Congress and heard the military debates there. Then he goes on to describe what he calls a "water-melon" campaign of the Michigan militia. His speech contains one burst of satirical and mock-heroic declamation, which, though well-known, I must be permitted to quote. He said:

"We all, in fancy, see the gentleman from Michigan in that most dangerous and glorious event in the life of a militia general on the peace establishment — a parade day; the day for which all the other days of his life seem to have been made! We can see the troops in motion; umbrellas, hoe and axe handles, and other like deadly implements of war overshadowing all the field; when lo! the leader of the host approaches; 'Far off his coming shines.'

His plume, white, after the fashion of the great Bourbon, is of ample

length, and reads its doleful history in the bereaved necks and bosoms of forty neighboring hen-roosts!"

But in appreciating the fun we must not lose sight of the sterling sense in this remarkable speech. It had only "wit enough to keep it sweet."

It came to be quite the custom for the rival parties to hold meetings in the same town upon the same day. This started, probably, by way of joint debates, which frequently degenerated into rival meetings. I have a letter from the Hon. Samuel F. Vinton to Mr. Ewing (dated September 10, 1840), which gives a lively account of one of these affairs, as follows:

"The Whigs of Athens had written to you and myself and I believe to Murphy to come and meet a challenge which the loco-focos had put out for a debate yesterday with Allen and Shannon. I went. In the morning, before going to the grounds, they backed out, pretending to make a difficulty about terms. I sent word to them that I would meet them on any terms they might name. They refused. I went down to the grounds and before the speaking began challenged the *whole caravan*, told them to take their own terms; they publicly declined. I then told them they must consider themselves *backed out*. The Whigs shouted over them and hallooed *backed out*; crowed and bantered — some hallooed *Petticoat Allen*. They took it all as quiet as lambs. I then told the Whigs I would address them at the Court House. We formed a procession in front of them, took off more than one-half of the assembly, and spent the day in speeches and crowing."

A letter from Thomas Corwin (dated September 12th, 1840), describes a joint debate at Zanesville as follows:

"They had a real flare-up here last night. Taylor and Mathiot addressed the people by agreement, half an hour each, and Goddard was to close the case. He went reading Taylor's bank votes from the legislative journal, including his negative votes on the individual responsibility clause, etc., until the General and his folks became furious and called out to leave, as Goddard's half hour had expired. Charley went on and two meetings sprung up, each addressed by its own orators. Amongst other things Goddard talked of M—'s drawing cash twice from the State Treasury some years ago, whereupon the Colonel talks of caning and all that to-day. You must know there is a two-days' muster here, ending to-day. The General is now out at the grounds and I have not yet seen him. As to the aforesaid caning, you know that is only

in my eye. As to the charge, what is said is said, it will remain, for our friend Goddard is not the man to back out when he sets down his foot."

Doubtless there was much provocation for the cry of the Loco-focos against the "log-cabin foolery" of the Whigs, but they were themselves a good second. Senator Allen went about Ohio with Colonel Richard M. Johnson, then Vice-President, holding him up as the real hero of the battle of the Thames, and calling upon him to show his wounds. A specimen of Johnson's oratory has been preserved in a letter written from Piqua shortly after the close of the campaign, from which I quote as follows:

"Colonel Richard M. Johnson delivered a speech among us, in which he said: 'I love the Germans and I love the Irish, for just as soon as they touch our soil they become good Democrats, and I love the democracy. If the democracy says, 'Possum up the gum stump,' I say, 'Possum up the gum stump'; if democracy says, 'Kooney in the hollow,' I say, 'Kooney in the hollow.' I go with the democracy."

General Harrison made a personal canvass. He was the first presidential candidate to do so; and, referring to this in his speech at Chillicothe, he deprecated the necessity for it lest it should prove the establishment of a bad precedent, but added:

"I am here because I am the most persecuted and calumniated individual now living; because I have been slandered by reckless opponents to the extent that I am devoid of every qualification, physical, mental and moral, for the high place to which at least a respectable portion of my fellow-citizens have nominated me."

A portion of one of his tours is stated in one of the Cincinnati papers, as follows: On the afternoon of Friday, he passed from Chillicothe to Lancaster; on Saturday from Lancaster to Somerset and back, speaking three hours at Somerset and traveling thirty-three miles; on Monday from Lancaster to Circleville; on Tuesday from Circleville to Columbus; leaving Columbus on Wednesday, he reached Cincinnati on Thursday, after twenty-four consecutive hours of traveling. This was cited to give the lie to the cry of "granny petticoats," as the Loco-focos called him. Senator Allen had started this nickname. Just before the battle of the Thames some Indian deserters had reported that General Proctor had promised his Indian allies to turn Harri-

son over to them should he be captured. Garrison retorted that when he should capture Proctor the Indians would be permitted to dress the British General like a squaw. And Senator Allen related how the ladies of Chillicothe presented Garrison with a petticoat in token of his courage. In reply to this General Murphy, of Chillicothe, in the Scioto Gazette of January 20, 1836, published a savage attack upon Allen.

The amenities have grown in politics since that day, when Whigs and Loco-focos held little social intercourse. The campaign was marked by much bitterness and by one tragedy. At the Baltimore convention, Thomas H. Laughlin, a marshal of the Whig procession, was killed while trying to prevent a gang of ruffians from breaking through the line.

But underneath all the roistering, rollicking and horseplay, underneath all the savagery of political warfare, there was on the part of the Whigs a deep and abiding feeling that our institutions were endangered by usurpations of the Executive and that they were rallying under a great and popular leader to save them.

As John A. Wise put it, it was "Union of the Whigs for the sake of the Union." It was the cause of American liberty which they rallied to sustain. To quote from a letter by Mr. Ewing (May 12, 1840) :

"It is indeed the cause of self-government, the true Republican principle, the supremacy of the popular will acting by and through its constitutional agents, that we seek to reinstate and sustain against irresponsible and despotic power.

"We maintain the supremacy of the constitution which that power tends to subvert. We go for the protection of property, of labor and its hard earned fruits, against the wild spirit of destruction which is clearly taking possession of our fair land and blasting the energies of the people.

"We maintain the freedom of opinion, of thought, and action, in politics as in everything else. We maintain it against the tyranny of *party*, the most absolute and unrelenting that ever fettered the human mind.

"We go for the freedom of elections and require them to be uncontrolled by executive interference; that an electioneering corps of executive officers paid out of the public purse shall be no longer suffered to pervade and infest our land.

"We go for the ancient democratic principle of appointment to office, for the service of the *country* and not the service of the *party*.

We claim the restoration of the ancient test '*Is he capable? is he honest? is he faithful to the Constitution?*' instead of that which has usurped its place, and which practically is this—'Is he loud? is he reckless? will he go through thick and thin for the party?'

"We demand the safe keeping of the public money and that it be not entrusted or continued in the hands of men who consider it and treat it as *spoils*.

"We go for retrenchment and reform, in solemn truth, and not as a mere *catch-word* of party—our suffering country requires it—the people demand it, and they know how to compel obedience.

"And we have selected from among the great and good of this mighty nation a well-tried patriot and an honest man who stands forth the exponent, the visible representation of our principles; and with one heart and one voice we unite in his support. Long as I have known and highly as I prize him, I need not speak to you, citizens of Indiana, of his merits. Forty years of his valued life has been devoted to our common service. In peace, in the councils of the nation he has been the advocate and friend, in war he has been the victorious defender, of the now great and powerful West, and the battlefield on which you meet is *one* enduring monument of his fame."

The appeal was to all "who duly appreciate civil liberty" and were "identified with the great cause of constitutional freedom;" to all who would "unite in putting down the revolutionary dynasty now in power and in bringing again to the people the constitution which the present executive, like the past, has trampled under foot."

One call for a meeting says (New Lisbon, Aug. 5, 1840) :

"The present alarming degree of executive encroachment on the reserved rights of the people—its reckless disregard of the constitutional checks placed upon it in the other coordinate branches—its entire abandonment of the first principles of a popular and representative government—and its settled determination to merge every consideration of patriotism and national policy in a pitiful scramble for place and power on the part of the President and of his political favorites—call loudly, we think, to the people to rise in their strength—in their sovereign capacity, and assert and maintain their rights and liberties, and to rebuke those who have so wantonly disregarded the best interests of those over whom they have been appointed to rule."

In a call signed, among others, by Millard Fillmore, for a meeting at Buffalo in October, the committee say:

"We feel that we are approaching a crisis in the political history of this country, second only to that great struggle that gave us independence and freedom."

The distinguished Whig manufacturer and philanthropist of Massachusetts, Abbott Lawrence, in a private letter of congratulation on the election, says (Boston, Nov. 14, 1840):

"We have chosen General Harrison President of the United States, which gives confidence to the capitalists and will shortly produce an effect upon the labor of the country. You have done nobly in Ohio—but I pray you not to forget that the old Bay State has brought out the spirit of '76 and sustained her character gloriously."

At the Baltimore convention Mr. Webster spoke as follows:

"The States are here, everyone of them, through their representatives. The *old* thirteen of the Republic are here from every city and county, between the hills of Vermont and the rivers of the south. The *new* thirteen, too, are here, without a blot or a stain upon them. The twenty-six States are here. No local or limited feeling has brought them here, no feeling but an American one—a hearty attachment to the country. We are here with the common sentiment and the common feeling that we are one people. We may assume that we belong to a country where one part has a common feeling and a common interest with the other. . . .

"We are called upon to accomplish, not a momentary victory, but one which should last at least half a century. It was not to be expected that every year, or every four years, would bring together such an assemblage as we have before us. The revolution should be one which should last for years, and the benefits of which should be felt forever. Let us, then, act with firmness. Let us give up ourselves entirely to this new revolution."

And Henry Clay said:

"We received our liberty from our revolutionary ancestors, and we are bound in all honor to transfer it, unimpaired, to our posterity. Should Mr. Van Buren be re-elected, the struggle of restoring the country to its former glory would be an almost hopeless one."

Lastly, I quote an editorial from the *Harrison Eagle* (Taunton, Mass., Oct. 31, 1840):

“FREEMEN! AWAKE!

Friends—Americans—Patriots—Citizens—

You, who have wives and children, who look up to you for protection and support—you who have toiled on to the middle age of life—prospering and to prosper under our glorious institutions. Young men—you who have just started upon your untried career—you who are not born to wealth, and have nothing to depend upon but your good names, unblemished reputations, and the credit system for your ultimate success and prosperity in life—one and all, who value the honor, safety and glory of your country, and would rescue her from a piratical band of spoilers—who would preserve, cherish, maintain, and transmit to posterity unimpaired, the privileges and immunities secured to you by the toil, blood and martyrdom of the heroes of the revolution, our patriotic fathers—come up manfully, boldly, fearlessly to the rescue. Form in solid columns—let not one single man, lame, crippled, halt or blind, who loves his country, stay away. Come one, come all, to the rescue. March up undaunted to the ballot box, on the ninth day of next November, and deposit your votes for *Harrison and Tyler*—and by so doing, you will brand with the seal of your condemnation—agrarianism—blasphemy—atheism—Brownsonism—and Van Burenism in Old Bristol.

“Fear not—falter not—pause not. A glorious victory awaits you, if you but perform your duty—sleep not upon your posts—keep the watch-fires of liberty burning—put on your armor, and rally with brave indomitable hearts for the approaching contest—cleave down the temples of false prophets and false gods, and let them mingle with the dust—scatter the priests who have burned strange incense upon our altars like chaff before the popular whirlwind of your indignation—and then shall your country once more be free—and the car of State roll on in triumph manned by the friends of liberty and prosperity, and under the command of the veteran patriot and the honest Farmer WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON.”

Nor was this all overwrought political declamation. Within fifteen years the executive was overriding the will of the people in Kansas; and, twenty years after, the very existence of the nation was put to the hazard of the sword. But it is unnecessary to impute to the Whigs foreknowledge; there were many live issues crying out for settlement. The twenty thousand federal offices were filled with men, all of one party, and aggressively partisan; the national-banking system had been broken up; the currency of multitudes of state banks was depreciated or worth-

less; forty millions of surplus in the national treasury had been distributed among the States; the revenues had decreased; the expenses which had been \$13,000,000 per annum during J. Q. Adams' administration, had increased under Van Buren to \$37,000,000; the federal government, apparently, was on the verge of bankruptcy; wages had declined, in some cases as much as one-half; the cost of living had increased; and it was estimated that a million men were out of employment. To cap all, defalcations, like those of Price and Swartwout, were extremely common. A single document communicated to Congress by the Secretary of the Treasury contained a list of more than fifty defaulting sub-treasurers, called "leg-treasurers," the sums varying from one thousand to more than one hundred thousand dollars.

Such was the campaign and such the hero. How deeply the people had been stirred may be judged from the fact that the total vote at this election was nearly one million larger than at the election of 1836. Harrison's majority on the popular vote was about 150,000, and in the Electoral College he had nearly four-fifths of the electors.

The President called about him a cabinet of great ability: Daniel Webster, Secretary of State; Thomas Ewing, Secretary of the Treasury; John Bell, of Tennessee, afterward candidate for President on the Bell and Everett ticket, Secretary of War; George E. Badger, of North Carolina, Secretary of the Navy; Francis Granger, of New York, Postmaster-General; and John J. Crittenden, of Kentucky, Attorney-General.

In just one month, came the sad death of the President. Nothing had been done except to deal with the ravenous horde of office-seekers, whose importunities were largely responsible for his death. The state of public opinion in Ohio on the distribution of the offices may be surmised from the statement that, on the basis of population, aside from the postoffices, she was entitled to 642 places in the public service, and actually had only 137.

The President was distressed by the attitude of his party toward the public offices. But the Van Buren administration, as

already indicated, retained or appointed many unfit men. Edwin P. Whipple, in a lecture delivered in 1845, refers to the "spectacle of gentlemen taking passage for France or Texas, with bags of the public gold in their valises." Along the same line is the following defence of the removals which I find among Mr. Ewing's memoranda :

"There was also another reason and a more just one for this opinion of the public and I may say mandate of the popular will. It had been the policy of the party just thrust from power to retain in office none but their active political adherents, those who would go for them thoroughly in all things; and the performance of official duty was far less requisite to a tenure of office than electioneering services. Hence the offices had become for the most part filled with brawling, offensive political partisans of a very low moral standard, their official duties performed by substitutes or not performed at all. . . . It was thought wise and prudent to make many changes, and by so doing to elevate, as far as possible, the official standard, and insure a more faithful execution of official duties."

Some of the traditions of the cabinet are worth noting. In the correspondence of M. de Bacourt, the French minister, we get glimpses of Mr. Webster, rather awkward as Master-of-ceremonies, lining the foreign representatives along the wall in order of seniority in service and marching the President and Cabinet in, in single file, at the first diplomatic reception; of Crittenden chewing tobacco and Badger smoking; and of Bell, whom the minister chanced to meet at the home of the Secretary of the Treasury, throwing himself full length onto a sofa and putting his feet on the arm of a chair; all very much to the disgust of the French minister.

I remember a story of the first diplomatic reception which my father used to tell. Mr. Webster, who was much given to the grand manner, asked the Cabinet to meet at his office in the State Department, that they might pass in a body to the White House. He ranged them in the order which pleased him, himself first, little Mr. Badger last, and started the procession through the White-House grounds. There was one man in the line who felt himself misplaced. As they approached the White House Badger slipped around in front of Mr. Webster, and, assuming a particu-

larly irritating strut, led the way into the building. The Cabinet were shown into an ante-room, where they awaited the coming of the President. Mr. Webster was magnificently arrayed in a blue coat and waistcoat, with brass buttons. As they were solemnly standing there, Badger stepped over to him and said: "Pardon me, Mr. Webster, but would you mind telling me how much that waistcoat cost?" Mr. Webster, looking down upon him with good-humored disdain, exclaimed, "You egregious trifler!"

When the Cabinet broke up by reason of the rupture with President Tyler over the bank-vetoes, Webster remained. Though all the other members retired, his defection impaired immensely the force of their demonstration, and strengthened the hands of the President. It led to bitter but temporary resentment. I find a memorandum in Mr. Ewing's hand which, though perhaps not quite germane, is so full of feeling that I cannot forbear to quote it. It was written in 1864. Speaking of Mr. Webster, he says:

"The last time I met him, before some difference as to national policy cast a shade of unkindness between us, was in the Supreme Court. I was there attending to my causes; he in the Senate, but waiting for the coming on of some very important case. I met him every morning about eleven for nearly a month—the Senate sat at twelve—and we walked behind the judges' seat and were social. One day I was detained at home. Next morning we met at the usual hour and as we shook hands, he said:

'One morn I missed him.'

This was kindly and handsome, and when I read that on his death-bed he asked for Gray's Elegy, the scene rushed upon my memory with a force that almost unmanned me. How often,—morning, noon and evening,—have I since missed him."

While we praise those who have reached the highest place in our Government, it must not be forgotten that, though only six Ohio men ever attained to that distinction, many have stood, capable, and ready to fill the office. Out of an average voting population in Ohio, during the past hundred years, of about half a million, but a bare half-dozen have been chosen to the presidency; only about one in one hundred thousand. I am reminded of an anecdote told me of President Hayes by Mr. John Brisben Walker: *At a time when during the Hayes administration the secretaryship of war fell vacant. Mr. Walker, among*

others, approached the President with the suggestion that he appoint as Secretary Mr. Murat Halstead, of Cincinnati. Knowing that the President would question the propriety of making two appointments to the Cabinet from the same State, Mr. Walker armed himself with precedents to sustain it, and when General Hayes raised the question, he cited them. "Yes," said the President, "I know that there are precedents for the appointment of two men from the same State to the Cabinet. But can you find a precedent for the appointment of an Ohio Secretary of War, when the President and Secretary of the Treasury are from Ohio; an Ohioan is General of the army, another Lieutenant-general; when the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court and one of the associate justices are from Ohio; when an Ohio man is minister to France and another minister to Japan?" — and so on through a long line of his fellow-statesmen all filling high offices.

We honor the six Ohio Presidents for their ability in snatching the great and coveted place. We honor them more for the patriotism and capacity which they brought to the discharge of its duties. They will be remembered because their careers and character are incentives to high ideals and great deeds. But they interest us, above all, as types of that native American people, which, in the brief span of one hundred years, changed twenty-five millions of acres of savage wilderness into this progressive, happy, proud commonwealth.

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